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**Uncovered Roots: Creating a Culture of Literacy in the Gardner/Alma
Community**

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**Uncovered Roots: Creating a Culture of Literacy in the Gardner/Alma
Community**

by

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Thesis

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Dedication

In memory of my Abuelita, Maria Victoria Vera-Bravo. You always believed in me and inspired me to follow my dreams.

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Abstract

Uncovered Roots: Creating a Culture of Literacy in the Gardner/Alma Community

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The creation of the cultural history of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* a branch of the San José Public Library system as seen through the avenues of oral history, storytelling and a community archive housed in San José, CA. This thesis discusses how oral histories and storytelling create the cultural history of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. A community group that wanted their language and cultures to be represented in a local library space founded the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. This group did not want to add to the current library, but wanted to create a separate library to meet their needs. The space became not only the location to acquire and disperse knowledge but also a place to create community and culture. The oral histories collected for this research have across the board emphasized the notation of community and culture through activism. This research gathers oral histories in order to create a living history for the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. Therefore, this research will be guided by the following questions: How is the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* a space of social justice?

How does my oral history research act as a form of social justice for the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*? How does the space of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* create culture, history, and community?

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“We were part of the experience. We saw it grow. We gave birth to it.
We nurtured it”
(Marta Morales 2014)

The focus of this study is on the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*, a branch of the San José Public Library system located in the Gardner/Alma community of San José, California. This library was the first in the San José public library system to house and circulate Spanish language materials as a bilingual and bicultural individual, I grew up walking to this library from my home or my grandparent’s home. This library supported in my awareness that there were other people who also were bilingual and bicultural in my community. The Gardner/Alma neighborhood is known for its strong migrant population including Spanish-speaking people from all over Latin America. While I have my own stories and connections to this library, this research is more than an individual’s story – it is a collective community history.

The *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* and the Washington Youth Center¹ held a celebration on November 15, 2014, to observe the fifteen years or *quinceañera*² celebration for both of these institutions have been housed in adjoining buildings. While this anniversary event was not the beginning or even a turning point in the process of my thesis research, it did connect the pieces I needed to document the history of the library as

¹ The Washington Youth Center is part of Catholic Charities foundation. Their mission is “to provide youth and their families with the support needed to be successful in school, employment, and in the community.”

² A *quinceañera* is a celebration held for teenage woman who are turning fifteen. This rite of passage or tradition can be seen in many Latin American societies. (Stavans 30)

this event included paper documents with a timeline of the history along with speakers and video describing the history of the library. I attended this event at the end of my research. The event gathered important people in both institutions' history. I was introduced to community members and staff through out my research process, and these contacts assisted me in learning not only about the history and its mission in serving the Spanish-speaking community but also about the field of librarianship. While the ensuing conversations touched on many topics, my goal was always the same: to gather the information of the history through interviews of key participants. I want to create a living history of this library housed at the roots of the Gardner/Alma community with multiple branches spreading out and connecting across the city.

In the early 1970s, a group of mothers organized to create a library in the Gardner/Alma neighborhood of San Jose, California to serve the Latino and Spanish-speaking community. These women were organizing during the time of the civil rights movements in the United States of America and their work stemmed from a desire for social justice. For this thesis, social justice is defined as the desire to;

... design systems and services that are equitable, meaningful, and empowering for marginalized and disenfranchised people. (Mehra 188)

As described later in the history section of this thesis, these women first established a small library at the local church called *La Pequeña Biblioteca*, this was prior to the library becoming the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*.

Artist Pilar Agüero-Esparza's work, entitled *La Vida en Los Dichos* (Life in Proverbs), serves as decor throughout the inside of the current building. The artwork

consists of five panels along with bilingual *dichos*³ in Spanish and English. These dichos were placed alongside the images of art through out the library. The panels are placed high on the interior walls and spread throughout the building. The image in Figure 1 depicts how the words are placed on the walls along side the panels. You can see the stacks in this image. Each saying illustrates the bilingual and bicultural nature of the culture of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. The panel in Figure 2 illustrates one of the dichos, reading “*El pueblo que pierde su historia pierde su destino.*” “A people who lose their history lose their destiny.”⁴ As you can see from the figure it includes artwork along with the dicho in Spanish.



Figure 1: *Dichos* on the library walls

³ *Dichos* are known as Spanish proverbs or reframes.

⁴ A staff member pointed out this image to me when I was on a site visit in January of 2013. He noted that he had worked at other libraries in the system and often times didn't know about the archive that was located in the branch. He mentioned that he hoped my work would keep the history alive.



Figure 2: La Vida en Los Dichos

The panel shown in Figure 2 includes a picture of César Chávez, a union leader and labor organizer of farm workers in California. César Chávez is a symbol of activism and social justice in California. The colors in the piece include vibrant colors of greens, reds, and purples. Alongside the portrait of César Chávez is a piece of land being farmed, with workers on the land. There is also an image of hands with palms open between two images of fruit. This image relates directly to the creation of the library with its roots in a group of community members organizing to create a library that serves their community with its cultural and language needs.

How does the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* create history within its walls?

Libraries house information in multiple formats. Libraries are known for building collections of books, DVDs, music in the form of CDs and digital formats. Libraries often also house archives. The Society for American Archivist distinguishes the

difference between archives and libraries; “Archives also exist to make their collections available to people, but differ from libraries in both the types of materials they hold, and the way materials are accessed.” (What Are Archives and How Do They Differ from Libraries) This library also holds an archive, located on site, documenting the history and creation of the library. (Lozano 2014) The act of a local community member creating this archive emphasizes the wiliness this community had to organize and retain its history. The most fascinating part of the library’s history for me as a researcher is the idea to create a Spanish language library was initiated by a group of mothers living in the neighborhood. These mothers wanted a place for their children to experience their culture and language beyond what was learned in the home. Therefore, the library’s creation, initiated by this group of mothers, including Morales, encompasses feminism, social justice, and community.

The following thesis will be divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 focuses on the history, emphasizing the multiple locations of the library both present and past. Chapter 3 reviews theories that relate to the field of librarianship and women’s and gender that are relevant to this project. Chapter 4 discusses the methodology used to both collect and analyze the data. The fifth chapter is the analysis of my research findings. The final chapter discusses the conclusion and possible further research options.

The *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* holds a rich history within its walls and in the people whose lives it has touched. While at the center of this research is my personal connection to this library, it is also the story and history of it’s creation, it’s continued sustainability, and the library’s impact on the lives of those it serves. This research will

be guided by the following questions: How is the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* a space of social justice? How does my oral history research act as a form of social justice for the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*? How does the space of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* create culture, history, and community? In addition to these research questions, this thesis aims to provide a collective living history for the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. The oral histories collected will be added to the current community archive and preserved as part of the history of this library.

CHAPTER 2: THROUGH THE YEARS

This chapter discusses the history of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. It was housed in several locations prior to its current building. Each location has its own histories and stories. To further understand the history and current location, the following pages discuss a bit of the history alongside with a description of the community and culture already developed within the neighborhood. The story begins with a group of community members in the Gardner/Alma community wanted to create a space for a little library that includes Spanish and Latin American cultural materials.

SETTING

The Gardner/Alma neighborhood is known as a home to incoming migrants when they are first moving to San José. The neighborhood has shops with *pan dulce*⁵, culturally relevant food markets tailored to the Latino community, and even shops for special events such as quiceñeras and *día de los muertos*. Reverend Cuchulain Moriarity or, as the Gardner/Alma community knew him, Padre Moriarity, was a pastor at Sacred Heart Church as well as a lecturer in the Mexican American Graduate Studies department at San Jose State University. (Johnstone 2) The Sacred Heart Church and Padre Moriarity supported Marta and the group of mothers in the creation of *La Pequeña Biblioteca*, which was the name of this “little library.” *La Pequeña Biblioteca* was housed in a small

⁵ *Pan dulce* direct translation is sweet bread. This is typical a pastry that is often eaten as a desert in Latin American countries.

closet of the church. This was the start of Marta and the community members dream to create a library tailored to the population's language and cultural needs.

The first official location was in 1973 and 1974 located at the center of the Gardner/Alma community. It was located in part of a vacant convent on the grounds of the Sacred Heart Church (Morales *Biblioteca Latinoamericana Timeline*). Figure 3 displays an image of what the building looks like currently from the outside. Nora Conte one of the first San José Public library employees to be part of the opening of this library discussed in her interview the transition of this old convent. She stated;

We were working with the Sacred Heart Church and they were willing to let us use the old convent. I went into it and said how do you convert this into a library. This carpet, I don't think there was even carpet in there if it was in there. I said well all right and the painting and the shelves there was no money for any of that so I thought how do I do this. So I wrote us a letter to J. C. Penny and asked for carpeting for the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* and they gave it to us. And then I went to the school, the adult education school and said can you help us with the painting and the students came in and helped us with the painting and than there were some shelves and I can't remember how we got them.... We did the checkout function. I always call it probably one of the most sacred functions.

Because it was up on the altar. (Nora Conte 2014)

This is a glimpse into part of the oral histories conducted for this project. What's seen in this quote is the beginning stages of how the community supported in the creation of this library. It was fitting that *La Pequena Biblioteca* that started in a closet of Sacred Heart

Church transformed into the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* housed inside of an old convent on the grounds of the church. The check out being a old altar serves as a metaphor for how sacred the gift of literacy is to this community. At this time the convent also housed immigrants and political refugees from multiple countries in Latin America. My parents were both living in that part of the convent when they first arrived into San José.



Figure 3: Old Convent

The second location was a bigger space and part of Center for Employment Training (C.E.T.) at 690 Locust Street. This second location was at the old Woodward Wilson Junior High Cafeteria, what is now all owned by and has become C.E.T. offices in San José, California. This location is approximately .5 miles from the Sacred Heart church grounds. There is a mural from this location that has been moved to the outside of the current building. Figure 4 depicts the mural in it's current location on the outside of the current building. This mural stands out in my mind because of the images depicting

many books scattered throughout the scene. An Aztec calendar can be seen behind the image of a serpent and a tiger. The colors in the mural are bright including reds, oranges, and yellows. The mural depicts culturally relevant images of Latin American culture like the Aztec calendar, with the connection of literacy by including the multiple images of books. This is the space that I remember from my childhood, as it is the location that I grew up walking to. All previous locations other than the current building were temporary spaces.



Figure 4: Mural from the C.E.T. location

The current building is discussed in many of the oral history interviews as being significant because it is the first location to be built to house the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. This building is located at 921 South First Street in San José, CA. Community members in the neighborhood were part of the first advocates to create the

library. *Los Amigos de la Biblioteca*,⁶ whose members are part of the Gardner/Alma community, not only organized the creation of the library in its initial years but the group continues to support by volunteering at different events.

The current location is within a few miles of downtown San José in the center of the Gardner/Alma neighborhood. Figure 5 is an image of the new building from the outside. This location is .6 miles from the second location at the C.E.T. offices and .5 miles from the old convent. The Washington United Youth Center and the current location opened on November 20, 1999, in adjoining buildings. The Washington elementary school is also located on the same block of these two buildings.



Figure 5: Outside of the 921 1st Street, current location of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*.

⁶ *Los Amigos de la Biblioteca* is the equivalent to the Friends of the Library groups. Throughout the years members have included the original founders of *La Pequeña Biblioteca*.

Evidence of Chicana feminism can be seen scattered throughout this history. Nora Elia Cantú describes Gloria Anzaldúa's role in the field of Chicana feminism in the anthology, *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*:

She is the warrior forging new paths for the rest of us, breaking ground for the buildings and constructing and deconstructing even her own work. My favorite *dicho* is “*Cada cabeza es un mundo*” and Gloria Anzaldúa's mundo intersects with mine in many ways. Her work has influenced my own writing and thinking in innumerable ways. (Cantú 46)

This quote speaks not only of the power of the written word but how a writer can constantly influence those who read her work. The connection of the *dicho* shows how relevant dichos are to Latino cultures and the importance of having them placed along the walls of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. Writing in this sense becomes a foundation to change the norms of academia and encourage social justice. Marta Morales and the group of women who started the original *La Pequeña Biblioteca* at the Sacred Heart Church, prior to the opening of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*, were seen as warriors for some in the Gardner/Alma community. In this way the women were organizing for social justice through providing groundwork to create this library.

LA QUINCEAÑERA

I had the opportunity to attend the formal La Quinceañera event of the Washington United Youth Center and *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* celebrating 15 years in the current building in San José on November 15, 2014. At one point, Marta Morales, the

woman who is known as the one behind the idea to create the library spoke, along with other members of the community. (Marta Morales 2014) She is known as a central figure in the founding, and key to the involvement of the inception of this library. Morales exhibits the multiple ties community members have to the library. She is bilingual and bicultural, and still lives in the area. It was at the quinceañera event Marta Morales reflected on what the library meant to her: “*La biblioteca me transforme me vida...*” [The library transformed my life] (Marta Morales 2014). The story of Marta Morales’s involvement is multifaceted and her story exemplifies the community and culture created. As a result of being part of the creation of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*, Marta went back to school and eventually received her Ph.D. in education.



Figure 6: Youth at the Quinceañera celebration

The quinceañera event had decorations and attire similar to what a quinceañera celebration would look like for a young woman. As part of the theme for this event, young women dressed in formula quinceañera dresses stood outside the community center to greet guest; as shown in Figure 6. The colors of their dresses varied from white, blue, pink – even green. Not all the youth dressed in the quinceañera dresses were actually turning 15. I was introduced to people both in English and in Spanish as the researcher documenting the history. At each of the tables lay a program for the evening along with a printed history in the form a timeline for important events in the history of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. (Morales timeline) Wait staff prior to the program served food. Marta’s speech included part of the history of the founding in English and another community member followed with a reading in Spanish. The celebration included an award presentation honoring those who have served the library; a visit by an assemblyman and other political officials who were acknowledged and thanked at some point; performances by *Baile Folklórico* and *Danzantes Aztecas*; and an open dance. This reach history of the multiple locations and political activism by the community is only brief glimpse into the power of history and storytelling.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Our goal was to make people feel at home.” (Rita Torres 2013)

This chapter examines the literature that is relevant to this research on the subjects of public libraries, oral history, social justice, feminist studies, history, and the theory of space and place. As my thesis is interdisciplinary to encompass both the fields of women’s and gender studies along with information studies so is the literature discussed in this chapter. The follow pages build a foundation for interpreting the creation of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*.

WHAT IS A LIBRARY?

One way to define a library is by the services it provides to its clientele. In her book, *Introduction to Public Librarianship*, Kathleen de la Peña McCook describes public library services: “The public library supports family literacy, fosters lifelong learning, helps immigrants find a place, and gives a place to those for whom there is no other place to be” (1). The library is no longer just a place to house books and gather information; it also provides a variety of programs and, as such, it has become a community center. McCook adds that the term, public library, does not always mean the same thing depending on the location and type of library (*Introduction 2*). Libraries can serve different functions depending on the population it serves and location.

The definition of a public library is fluid and relevant when you examine the history of the creation of the library at hand. A community group wanting to see

materials in their language and about their culture founded the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. The story of the start of this library illustrates how a public library can be defined by the community it serves. One can see how this library serves the community first by its physical structure and location: the current building is located next to the Washington Youth Center, demonstrating the connection between the library as a site of learning and the continuance of that learning across generations. The Washington Youth Center provides similar programming/services to and in conjunction with the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. The space of a community center is seen in both these locations. Sarah Ann Long, former American Library Association President, chose “Libraries Build Community” as the theme for her presidential year. Long argued that,

I chose the theme “Libraries Build Community” for my year as ALA president because it is a fact (many libraries are involved in community building) and because I want to encourage libraries to step up there community building efforts ... “Libraries Build Community” means collaborating and forming partnerships and alliances. To be effective, we need to work with other libraries, groups, organizations and individuals who share our goals. Many libraries of all types are already involved in these partnerships, but I want to motivate libraries to move beyond the traditional partnerships and find the organizations that will help make the library a highly visible and integral part of the community. (McCook *Place at the Table* vii)

The notion of the importance of partnerships is not new to the concept of libraries and specifically the dream of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. The Gardner/Alma

community wanted this joint venture before it became common in the San José area to have community centers and libraries housed together or in the same vicinity. The community not only pushed for the creation but also called for services tailored to the Latino and Spanish-speaking community supporting its continued cultural heritage and literacy in both the English and Spanish language. This illustrates Long's description of a library's service extending beyond the books inside and creating through collaborative partnerships with organizations and community members.

It is one thing to look at librarianship as a whole but another to look at the services provided to Latinos. Salvador Güereña edited *Library Services to Latinos: An Anthology*. In this monograph, Mónica Scheliga Carnesí and María A. Fiol wrote of how rewarding it has been to make materials accessible to immigrants. In their chapter, *Queens Library's New Americans Program; 23 Years of Services to Immigrants*, they conclude with a very positive outlook of working with immigrant populations.

Observing the courage of a non-English-speaking man or woman sacrificing dignity to express themselves in imperfect English; seeing the joy in people's faces when you hand them a book in their native language, or the gratefulness in their eyes when they receive a piece of information that will help them deal with their landlord, or their child's teacher, or the immigration officer-this is the reward of our work. (Carnesí and Fiol 141)

Access and communication with partnerships are at the core of the above quote. Feminist academic work is often tied to activism and social justice through this concept of access.

This work can be seen as a form of social justice as a system that “[empowered] a marginalized people” to create their own library. (Mehra 188) Specific to the Queens library the staff found joy in making sure it’s patrons received the best services in their native language of Spanish.

Other public libraries illustrate exemplary services for the Spanish speaking. The Forsyth County Public Library in North Carolina established a program to specifically guarantee accessibility of Spanish language materials to Spanish-speaking populations. This public library started by moving all the Spanish language materials—including both adult and children’s materials — into one area. (Sundell 146) This library went even further by surveying patrons about what types of materials they would like to have in their libraries. Shortly after reviewing the survey results, the libraries started to offer magazines and music in Spanish. (Sundell 147) This specific case shows how libraries can make accommodations to not only include but guarantee access to Spanish speaking populations. The staff at the Forsyth County Public Library saw a need for their specific populations to have materials relevant to them and took action to make this happen. This is an example of a community and library showing support to make Latino communities feel welcome at their local public library.

SPACE AND PLACE

Libraries can be seen as both a space and place, specific to research in feminist geography. Feminist geographer Linda McDowell discusses how the meaning of a place

can shift in her book *Gender, Identity and Place* (McDowell 4). This is exemplified further in the quote, below,

Geographers now argue that places are contested, fluid and uncertain. It is socio-spatial practices that define places with multiple and changing boundaries, constituted and maintained by social relation of power and exclusion. (McDowell 4)

Linda McDowell's concept of place reiterates how certain environments, including public libraries, can change over time in relation to the social context of that place. Power relations in library systems are seen by the languages visible or invisible within a library, in the case of this research, the Spanish and English languages. Prior to the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*, Spanish language materials were not available in the San José Public Library collection. Doreen Massey discusses space further in her monograph *Space, Place and Gender*;

Moreover, since social relations are inevitably and everywhere imbued with power and meaning and symbolism, this view of the spatial is as an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification. Such a way of conceptualizing the spatial, moreover, inherently implies the existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism. Most evidently this is so because the social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding different positions as part of it. (Massey 3)

Massey relays this concept of space in relation to power and social status. This concept interprets the users of the space as holding a different interpretation based on their social location in society. The power a person holds in society defines how they interact in a particular space.

Library systems originally are seen as a space to gather and/or acquire knowledge. Currently, libraries have multiple possibilities of use and function as more than just a place for knowledge containers. Svanhild Aabo and Ragnar Audunson conclude their article with the following quote, illustrating the way public library spaces have changed.

Fluidity is what remains as the dominating impression, and this is also with regard to life spheres. Users float between roles and spheres-between that of a student, that of a family member, that of a friend and neighbor, that of a citizen and so forth. (Aabo and Audunson 148)

Fluidity comes up again in this quote similar to the way Sarah Ann Long describes libraries as building communities. Aabo and Audunson come to the conclusion that library spaces are ever changing and are dependent on the patrons and the library space, thus they discuss libraries becoming gathering spaces for neighbors to interact. The people using libraries and attending the programs are diverse, as is the population surrounding the library. The space of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* is also fluid based on its history, its founders, the patrons, the staff, the materials it houses, and its location within the Gardner/Alma neighborhood of San José. The materials and even the community programs offered or provided were specifically tailored to its patrons.

(Johnstone 3) This history of the location staying in the same neighborhood is activism through social justice created by the library founders and community.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IN LIBRARIES

Social justice is at the core of the history of this library and it's founding. Social justice will be defined in the context of libraries and communities using Francesa Polletta's work on storytelling as activism through the following definition;

Activists tell stories for strategic reason, and the stories I recounted are no exception. (Polletta 33)

This history is a story that can be seen as a form of social justice similar to the stories Polletta describes in her monograph. Polletta continues to describe in her monograph the power stories can take;

Stories are more than strategic devise...Stories assimilate confusing events into familiar frameworks while recognizing that things are no longer as they were and we no longer who we were... Movement stories turn the strange into new. This does not however mean they fully *explain* the new. (Polletta 34)

Marta Morales tells the story of the first years with pride. When she saw me at the 15-year anniversary celebration she inquired if my thesis would be *published*, adding that she would love a copy. The exposure of the history of this library would gain awareness to what the founders and community created and continue to create. She expressed the hope, also held by others, that the history and legacy will continue to keep the culture of the community and the library alive through the telling of the story.

Social justice is a term that is often used in academia and is defined loosely, depending on the field. For the scope of this paper, social justice is defined in both the field of information studies and women's and gender studies. In *A Practical Framework for Social Justice Research in the Information Professions*, Mehra, Albright and Rioux describe the need to bring about change in existing power dynamics within information studies. The authors describe how social justice can change the work the field is doing, the following describes one of the objectives described in this paper;

“Recognize the diverse potential of LIS work for bringing real change in people's lives” (Mehra, Albright and Rioux) The potential for social justice to create change is one that is inherent when conducting feminist informed research. Social justice in the context of my research is not just seen in the acts that the community members did to create the library but also my own research returning all the information I am being provided, such as the interviews and other documentation. I would go one step further in this theory of changing peoples' lives and argue the work “of changing people's lives” inspires others to continue to create change within the community. (Mehra, Albright and Rioux) Social justice in the form of change goes beyond the individual and is seen as community centered.

The theory and concept of social justice is one that is heavily influenced in the field of information studies. (Rioux 9) In his article, “*Metatheory in Library and Information Science: A Nascent Social Justice Approach*”, Rioux calls for the field to implement social justice in the classroom, in research, and even in the work environment (Rioux 14). Rioux calls for the profession to go beyond helping people as a form of social

justice and act to create a change in society : “The comfortable tradition of perceiving information work as “helping people” is an idea that may also be subject to criticism informed by social justice metatheory” (Riox 13). The *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* was founded for the Latino and Spanish-speaking population in the surrounding area. This allowed access to materials previously restricted to an English speaking audience. However, the library’s creation goes beyond creating access in that it changed the lives of patrons, employees, and community members. (Mehra, Albright and Rioux) This change is exhibited through the individual community member’s experience and manifests social justice in action.

ORAL HISTORY AND STORYTELLING

In many ways, one or more individuals can create community through storytelling. The act of storytelling can take the form of encouraging others to fight for social change due to the injustices they hear. (Polletta 3) Storytelling is a form of verbal history passed from person to person and even generation to generation within families and cultures. As Francesca Polletta argues, there is a purpose behind storytelling. Stories hold true to cultures as a way to keep the values and beliefs alive through the stories being told (Polletta 13). This paper will argue that the stories being told shape the culture of a community. Polleta discusses how as humans we tell stories and why; “We develop the capacity to tell stories early in life and that storytelling serves sense-making functions in all cultures. But narrative’s use is also governed by conventions that are not universal.” (Polletta 21) Not only are cultures being shaped but also communities are

being formed through story.

Power dynamics are seen through story by those who tell them and those who interpret them. Stories can be defined in many different ways, even the stories that we tell ourselves. Ken Plummer in his monograph *Telling Sexual Stories: Power, Change and Social Worlds* discusses the concept of story;

Recently, from all kinds of different theoretical perspectives in human studies – the folklorist, the oral historian, the semiotician, the anthropologist, the political scientist, the psychoanalyst – there has been a convergence on the power of the metaphor of the story. It has become recognised as one of the central roots we have into the continuing quest for understanding human meaning. Indeed, culture itself has been defined as ‘an ensemble of stories we tell about ourselves.

(Plummer 5)

Plummer indicated from this quote that stories help explain human beings to each other. The other part of this quote is the concept that stories help explain culture through the telling of multiple stories. This concept of stories explaining culture is relevant to the library at hand because the oral histories collected help to explain the culture that was developed at the library.

At the core of this research is oral history. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, discusses not only the history and injustices of indigenous people but also the way that all people can do research with indigenous populations and/or people of color in ways that are respectful and mindful. In her first chapter, she discusses the history of imperialism and colonialism

and the ways indigenous groups have lost their land and, in some cases, even their culture (Smith 23). Smith emphasizes the need for decolonization in the context of indigenous populations as a way to reclaim history (Smith 25). Smith states in this context of history making,

Indigenous peoples have also mounted a critique of the way history is told from the perspective of the colonizers. At the same time, indigenous groups have argued that history is a critical and essential aspect of decolonization. The critique of Western history argues that history is a modernist project that has developed alongside imperial beliefs about the other. (Smith 31)

Smith argues that historical texts have focused on a Western viewpoint as a foundation, therefore diminishing or excluding diverse voices such as indigenous groups and people of color. Western history is critiqued for marginalizing people of color by othering them in history. History can be reclaimed through storytelling from the perspective of the non-Western colonizer.

Smith continues to discuss the use of oral histories as a vehicle/instrument for passing on heritage and culture from one generation to another.

Story telling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women have become an integral part of all indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But that point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to the collective story in which every indigenous person has a place. For many indigenous writers stories are ways of passing down beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new

generations will treasure them and pass the story down further. The story and the story teller both serve to connect the past with the future, one generation with the other, the land with the people and the people with the story. (Smith 145)

Story telling in this capacity keeps the history and past of a community alive. This quote describes the cultural norm in indigenous communities of oral history and storytelling. Oral histories are not singular to indigenous cultures. The oral tradition is one used in multiple cultures and communities.

Oral history and storytelling can work together in creating community histories. Valerie Yow describes oral history in general terms as “the recording of personal testimony in oral form.” (Yow 3) Paul Thompson discusses oral history in the context of communities: “Oral history is a history built around people...It brings history into and out of the community.” (Thompson 28) Since the work I am doing is both a community history and a collective history, Thompson’s definition is a more accurate description for the research conducted. Lastly, Alessandro Portelli describes oral history as telling a story in the form of a narrative. “The narrator is now one of the characters, and the *telling* of the story is part of the story being told.” (Portelli 72) Oral history in the form that Portelli describes is similar to the stories being told through the oral histories of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. In the process of collecting these oral histories I noticed the element of story is often attached. The use of narrative through storytelling in the collection of oral histories taken surrounding the library is relevant example of Portelli’s meaning. Oral histories in this context tell the history and story.

Many theorist have defined story and oral histories. In relation to the community and the cultures represented at the Biblioteca Latinoamericana it is pertinent to use theory created with this group in mind. In the monograph *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios* by the Latina Feminist Group discuss the concept of testimonio and why it was used as a method for the text;

Because our stories so powerfully illustrated how these politicized experiences came to shape our lives' work and illustrated connections among Latinas, we abandoned the idea of comparing our academic research on Latinas and decided to become subjects of our own reflection. *Testimonio* would be the primary methodology used in whatever project we pursued. *Testimonio* would be a means to bring together our creative and research backgrounds, a more organic way of collecting and generating knowledge, and a method that would move us toward an understanding of *latinidades*. And *testimonio* was a process that felt comfortable, the familiar story telling that harkened back to our mother and other relatives' kitchens. (Latina Feminist Group 12)

The stories told in this monograph depict the multiple backgrounds be it cultural, educational and even economic to name a few these women experienced. The commonality of the experience was the ability to be able to write a testimonio for the monograph in the way that these women grew up hearing story telling. The concept and act of storytelling appears to be common among many Latino cultures. Testimonio is defined in this monograph as coming out of "intense repression or struggle, where the person bearing witness tells the story to someone else, who than translates, and publishes

the text elsewhere.” (Latina Feminist Group 13, 2001) This act of testimonio relates to the work for this thesis as I am the researcher hearing the stories and transcribing them for the purpose of this thesis and the larger project of collecting the history of the library. The text continues to explain the role of testimonies and Latinas in the following:

As Latinas who now have experienced being on both sides of the microphone, we view *testimonios* as a practice that seeks to meditate the power relations between ourselves and our subjects. In this way, our book represents a unique praxis within *testimonio* traditions, as we have made ourselves the subjects and objects of our own inquiry and voice. (Latina Feminist Group 21)

The group experienced how multiple Latinas coming from different Latin American countries built community through this act of testimonio. The group that organized to create the library built community to create the library and tell their own stories of the need for a library. The testimonio can be seen as a form of oral history used in this project but tailored to all interviews.

Oral history is defined by many theorist for the purpose of their specific field. Margaret Kovach’s definition of oral history is defined as “oral history concerns a particular aspect of an individual’s experience that pertains to the research topic at hand” (Kovach 96). These verbal stories encompass the current knowledge of the *Biblioteca Lationamericana* key participants can recall and in this thesis I use memories as the frame for the historical record of the history of the library. Nancy Raquel Mirabal did similar research on collecting oral histories of Latina/os in the Mission district to study the gentrification and racial displacement in the 1990s. (Mirabal 51) The goal of

Mirabal's project was similar to my own. I wanted to not only to document the history of for this thesis but also for the community. These oral histories become part of a collective history in the archive for the *Biblioteca Lationamericana*. Mirabal poses many questions that I had in my own research specifically relating to the question of documentation and also the process of how a place for the history to be made by those providing the information. (Mirabal 58) The notion oral history looks at the past but also takes into consideration of the present is one that has come across in multiple interviews. (Mirabal 58) This theme is another call to action by the group of people willing to be interviewed and participate in my master's thesis project.

HISTORY

Libraries can be connected to history as they are known as places that gather and store information. The concept of what history is and how libraries are important in this history is depicted in Michel-Rolph Trouillot's book, *Silencing the Past*. In his first chapter, Trouillot provides an overview of history and the representation of history. He opens by stating: "This is a story within a story-so slippery at the edges that one wonders when and where it started and whether it will ever end." (Trouillot 1) This quote sets the tone for the remainder of his chapter where he describes history as a story with "actors and narrators." (Trouillot 2) The history being told about the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* is one with many actors and narrators. The actors are those who partook in creating the library while the narrators are those telling the stories and participating in the oral history interviews. When Trouillot discusses memory in relation to history, he argues that

memory is not factual, noting that sometimes humans choose not to remember certain things. (Trouillot 14) He continues with a discussion of how, due to power, certain narratives are heard and respected while others are not. He states "...history reveals itself only through the production of specific narratives." (Trouillot 25) These specific narratives are those of people in places of power:

Power does not enter the story once and for all, but at different times and from different angles. It precedes narrative proper, contributes to its creation and to its interpretation. Thus, it remains pertinent even if we can imagine a totally scientific history, even if we relegate the historians' preferences and stakes to a separate, post-descriptive phase. In history, power begins at the source. (Trouillot 29)

Trouillot's concept of power and story is depicted not only as story but also creation and power. Trouillot's book addresses many issues that came up during my research, specifically the notion of power in the story being told to create history. The story of the creation of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* is also one of power relations and activism. The history and the stories of the library are personal for many of the people who were part of the library's creation. During the process of the interviews some people showed how personal this history was through sharing personal moments and even raw emotion of how important the library is to them.

RISKING THE PERSONAL AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Personal stories in the concept of the *Biblioteca Lationamericana* are relevant to its historical narrative but also the reason behind the creation. This library is not just important to me because of history but also because of my personal connection to the library. I grew up walking to this library, and learned what a library was through these interactions. I share this story and connection as part autoethnography (Creswell 14) and part of the theory of risking the personal. The feminist framework I worked from is based on the work of Gloria Anzaldúa of risking the personal. Feminist scholars often are faced with introducing issues such as race, class, and gender discrimination by exposing a bit of the personal. AnaLouise Keating and Gloria González-López address this concept and how risking the personal and creating change in oneself can also create change in society in the anthology *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*. Kavitha Koshy, a contributor to the anthology, describes how risking the personal can create change:

This act, risking the personal, political, and spiritual, has been at the core of Anzaldúa's activism, where the visionary meets the pragmatist and a spiritual activism combines with deliberate actions and physical pain to transform material realities. (quoted in Keating and González-López 2)

This quote reflects the ongoing need to be self-reflective including on one's role in society. In essence, these two selves, the personal and the performed self, can work concurrently to make social change. In the case of the people involved with the

Biblioteca Latinoamericana, this social change for the individual community members in the organizing around creating and sustaining the cultural and Spanish language materials in the library. In 1974, the group of mothers including Marta Morales and another group of community members joined together to create a committee to open this library.

(Johnstone 1) This act of joining together to create the library is a form of risking the personal because these actors expose their personal need for this library through telling stories such as growing up not having exposure to the classics. (Marta Morales 2014) These community members expose the vulnerability of needing a library tailored to the Spanish speaking and Latino community in the Gardner/Alma neighborhood.

Gloria Anzaldúa exemplifies the concept of risking the personal by exposing herself personally to create lessons and share new forms of knowledge. This knowledge goes beyond the individual and is also seen as collective knowledge within her community. Anzaldúa's concept of risking the personal is exemplified in *Speaking in Tongues: A Letter to Third World Women Writers*,

It's not on paper that you create but in your innards, in the gut and out of living tissue –*organic writing* I call it. A poem works for me *not* when it says what I want it to say and *not* when it evokes what I want it to ... It works when it surprises me, when it says something I have repressed or pretended not to know.

The meaning and worth of my writing is measured by how much I put myself on the line and how much nakedness I achieve. (Anzaldúa 33)

Risking the personal in my research allows space for my personal experiences in connection with my academic background in the field of information studies and

women's and gender studies. (Lozano 2014) Anzaldúa explains the rawness in her writing is how she risks the personal. Through this research I risk the personal by researching a library and a community close to my heart, but also by writing about this library. The rawness that Anzaldúa describes is one that can be seen throughout this thesis and the overall research that was conducted. The research and myself as an individual are multifaceted.

I undertake multiple roles in my research: as community member, graduate student, library student, women and gender studies student, feminist, and Chicana, to name a few. (Lozano 2014) All those roles come into my interactions with my interlocutors. These many roles relate to my intersections and the multiple intersectionalities of the people I came into contact with in my research. Lorena Garcia, in *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself: Latina Girls and Sexual Identity*, frames intersectionality with feminism in her overall assessment of her work (Garcia 151). She frames the roles the teens have in the home and school environment alongside with the relationships that they have with their mothers. She specifically discusses not only how these relationships shape their sexual agency but also the history of Latinos in America as part of their intersections (Garcia 151). I feel it is relevant for me to acknowledge my intersections in my research but also those of the people whom I interviewed. This is important to acknowledge the space from which I framed my work but also to be as supportive as possible in gathering the most relevant information based on the interlocutors intersecting identities. In *A Countryless Woman*, Castillo depicts the experiences of women of color in the United States (Castillo 25). The experience she

describes relates closely to the teens that Garcia describes in *Respect Yourself, Protect Yourself: Latina Girls and Sexual Identity*. Chicana feminists called themselves feministas during the Chicano/Latino movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. (Castillo 33) This essay depicts childcare needs for Latina feminist. The following describes what Castillo depicts as a place for feministas and their children to call home;

The feminist also wanted a bicultural and bilingual child care that would validate their children's culture and perhaps ward off an inferiority complex before they had a chance to start public school; traditionally, monolingual and anglocentric schools had alienated children, causing them great psychological damage.

(Castillo 35)

Castillo's work refers to the early 1970s, the decade when the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* opened its first location. The need Castillo speaks of is in alignment with the founder's mission for the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. Specifically, the call to create the library was one inspired by a Latina woman in the Gardner/Alma neighborhood. The Gardner/Alma community wanted a place where the bilingual and the bicultural met and was valued. The community saw the potential for this connection to be created. The two populations wanted to serve the needs of their culture and children.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter exams the methodology I used to conduct the research. I wanted to look closely at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* because both the community members involved and the collection are varied and include representation from a number of Latin American countries. That said, I employed an oral history methodology to gather stories about a Latino community largely told by individuals identifying as Latinos. I define Latino in the context of the paper as those who self-identify as Latino. (Lozano 2014) In my study, I looked at the current history as documented through the community archive located on site and the oral histories I collected.

DATA COLLECTION

I conducted field research at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. I took field notes on all these visits, along with audio or video recording as seen relevant. The dates of the visits ranged from May of 2013 to November of 2014. There were a total of seven site visits that ranged from a day to a few days long going through the archives, conducting interviews or attending events. The main focus of my research is on the oral history interviews and the collection of the history through these interviews.

I recorded audio and/or video oral histories of people who either worked at or helped in creating the library. All interviewees signed a release form consenting to use real names in the oral history interviews. I conducted unstructured oral history interviews from March 2013 to August 2014. Unstructured interviews were conducted with open-ended questions “intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants.” (Creswell

188) Seven interviews were conducted: of two community members, two retired staff, one current staff member at the time of the interview, one former staff member working in a community outside of San José, and one former member of the California State Library. Each interview lasted approximately one hour for a total of approximately nine hours of interviews. All but two of the interlocutors were actors in the early stages of either the creation or early employment at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. All interviews were conducted face-to-face. (Creswell 188) All but two of the interviews were held in a library setting. Of the two interviews not in a library, one was in an office building and the other in someone's home. While I also gave the option of conducting the interviews in Spanish or English, all interviews were in English with some Spanish words or sentences used throughout the interview. See Appendix A for a template of questions used. IRB approval was received to conduct this research.

APPROACHES TO RESEARCH

Feminist (Ackerly & True 21) and intersectional (Ackerly & True 30) approaches informed my analysis of the data; observations, archive content and oral history interviews. I used a reflective practice for the analysis. (Creswell 182) The intersectional approach supports the awareness of my personal experiences as well as an understanding of the interviewees life experiences. (Garcia 151) The autoethnography approach includes my personal connection and observations. (Anzaldúa 33). A grounded theory approach was used to start the process of conducting the research involving the participants and the library to lead the process (Creswell 14).

Vision alone is a privilege that not everyone in society has and feminist Donna Haraway stresses in her concept. She discusses the issue of subjectivity and objectivity, as well as situated knowledge in the following;

Vision can be good for avoiding binary oppositions. I would like to insist on the embodied nature of all vision and so reclaim the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere...I would like a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledges. (Haraway 393)

Depending on your background, place in society even place in academia your knowledge is situated. Looking at feminist research and practice through Haraway's situated knowledges looks at the whole place or person a feminist is studying. In the case of this thesis I looked at the Biblioteca Latinoamericana and the individuals who choose to participate in my research. This thesis will take note feminist perspectives' in order to critique libraries, community and cultural building.

THE ARCHIVE

The *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* houses an archive available to the public located within the employee access only section of the library. The archive does not have any visible signage the public or library staff could see. Most of the materials in the archive are written documents with some artifacts. Prior to choosing my research topic I visited

the archive during the summer of 2013 and to see what materials it held. Paper documents detailed different events the library held (i.e., book clubs, posadas, tortilla making) and the history in the form of a timeline (photographs, newspaper articles, a hammer from the ground breaking). A local community member established the finding aid and the archive for this library. (See Appendix B) This finding aid is helpful for looking at the history of the different locations, as finding aids are a “means of accessing the materials” (Society of American Archivist 61). It includes dates and addresses of each of the locations of this library. This finding aid is unique in that it does not follow the common protocol used by the Society for American Archivists. Typically archives are described in units or the box that holds all the material for that section. (Society of American Archivist 61) Often times it will even go into detail by folder name and what is held in each folder. The finding aid for the library labels sections by groups and location of the library. This organization of the archive stresses the importance of location for the library in it’s history.

The archive did not hold any interviews, transcripts, audio or video. There were academic papers in the archive with quotes by people including Marta Morales. Oral histories, in the form of my research were conducted because it would be a great addition to the current archive and would show the history told by those involved.

I hand coded the interviews based on common themes across interviews. Coding is defined as “most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data.” (Saldaña 14) These themes supported in developing the theories used in the

literature review.

CHAPTER 5: THE STORIES

“It takes energy it takes believing that something can be so you can pursue it and make it happen. In a nutshell the story of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* was really the coming together of San Jose Public Library... Los Amigos de la Biblioteca and a very young girl that believed yeah we can do this.” (Nora Conte 2014)

Storytelling is seen throughout the history of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith exemplifies how important storytelling is: “Jo-Ann Archibald describes story as work that educates the heart, the mind, the body and the spirit. She suggests that stories engage listeners and the story teller in a respectful relationship of reciprocity that creates and sustains oral cultures” (46). Storytelling in the form of history and oral traditions relates not only to my research methodology but also the way I conducted my research analysis. Smith describes the importance of history and the need to continue research that is both respectful and acknowledges indigenous cultures. I found that, while I focused on the history of the library I could not separate questions of the history from the cultures represented in the community. I collected oral histories of not only the creation of the library but also of the community in the neighborhood around the creation of this library. Many of the interviews describe community activism and organizing to build the library. Not only do these stories serve as historical accounts for the history of this library, they are also accounts for generations to come.

Some of the general themes seen across interviews include culture and literacy, social justice as well as community building. Community in this context includes those living in the Gardner/Alma neighborhood and frequenting the *Biblioteca*

Latinoamericana. The oral history in the form of this research connect directly to history, Paul Thompson states:

Oral history is not necessarily an instrument for change; it depends upon the spirit in which it is used. Nevertheless, oral history certainly can be a means for transforming both the content and purpose of history. (Thompson 22)

The story and history I tell through these oral histories are in the form of creating exposure to this community but also giving back. These tenants can be seen as an iterative social justice process as I collected the oral histories for the community and will be giving the documents back. This history is collected, organized, and retained at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*.

For my analysis, I look at the interviews through the eyes of the research while at the same time remembering my own intersectionality. As I frequented the local library as a child, my analysis includes risking the personal through exposing my personal connection to this research field site. I did not know the history of this library at the time or even my family's connection to the founding of this library. For instance, I learned through the archives that my grandfather and uncle attended a foundational meeting for the library and before it became part of the San José Public library system. (Lozano 2014) This link I have with the library is one that supports in how I interpret the data but also is part of theory of risking the personal that Anzaldúa describes in her writing. I look at the library as a researcher and through the lens of a bicultural and bilingual individual representing one of the targeted patrons the founders originally had in mind.

The concept of serving bilingual and bicultural individuals was something new at the time of creating the idea of this library. I also value this perspective as a child of immigrant parents. Based on personal experience, I know that my parents often valued the knowledge and support of the local librarians and staff providing services to my family in our native language, Spanish. The fact that the library's goal from the beginning was not only to house Spanish language materials but also to provide services in Spanish shows my family and I were the targeted patrons for this library.

THE DREAM

The official history of the library is recorded on paper in the community archive housed on site. Trouillot uses history in the following terms, "In vernacular use, history means both the facts of the matter and a narrative of those facts, both "what happened" and "that which is said to have happened." The first meaning places emphasis on the sociohistorical process, the second on our knowledge of that process or on a story about that process." (Trouillot 2) The history starts with a dream. On the inside cover of an album that holds the finding aid for the archive is a paragraph in Spanish and English that introduces the contents. See Appendix C for the full text of A Dream Fulfilled. The following is an excerpt;

It is true that the seed was planted by a group of young mothers who wanted their children to experience academic success. It would have been a beautiful and forgotten effort had it not also been the dream of thousands and thousands of people in our community. (Morales)

Marta Morales who is a key actor in this history wrote this introduction. This statement depicts what was mentioned across the board in the interviews about the community wanting this library to come into fruition. Marta Morales was named and mentioned by others in all the interviews as well as in the print resources in the archives as the person who had the idea. Marta Morales in the history or story is not only an actor but also a narrator of the history (Trouillot 2)

The dream started with Marta Morales. I interviewed her at the Martin Luther King Library in San José on March 9, 2014. Marta brought her laptop and read and answered the questions as the interview went along, and I audio recorded the interview using my cellphone. I added a few follow up questions based on her responses. Marta is the one interviewee whose comments inspired the title for my thesis by discussing the culture of literacy that is at the heart of the library's creation. In one of her responses in regards to the early stages Marta stated;

And [We] had bake sales and had burrito sales and just raised money. But what we were really doing was raising awareness in the community. And how important literacy was and how important it was for our children to read and so from that seed that we planted was the *Biblioteca Lationamericana* that was our motivation we wanted our children also to have access to books (Marta Morales 2014).

This quote illustrates Marta's and the other community members' desires to provide children with access to books, and also points to their motivation to create this culture of literacy within the community. The bake sales and burrito sales raised funds to create the

library and served the dual purpose of making the community aware of the need for this library and to create a culture of literacy within the Gardner/Alma community.

Women have held leadership roles in the history of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* from its creation to the present day. The framework of choosing to discuss Gloria Anzaldúa's work alongside this history emphasizes the role of Chicana feminism that is being acted upon through the activism of a group of woman organizing around to create this library. Marta Morales told the story of meeting Enrique Angulo at the *La Pequeña Biblioteca*. Enrique Angulo was a graduate student who applied for the grant through the California State Library that provided funding to open the first location. Marta says she was at the Sacred Heart Church distributing the books from *La Pequeña Biblioteca*, located in a closet. Enrique asked her what she was doing, her response, "I said, well a lot of people have talked about it [creating the library but] we are the only ones doing anything about it" (Marta Morales 2014). The community had a drive to continue to create this library. Marta discusses in her interview one of her favorite stories.

It's very touching. We were at a meeting one-day and there was this man who did not know how to read. And we told him that he knew better than anyone there why the Biblioteca was very important. He was very humble very poor. He took all the change that he had from his pocket and gave it to us. (Marta Morales 2014)

This story shows how the library impacted and changed the lives of people it served. It went beyond literacy and into the issues of class and access. The man wanted to learn literacy for himself and understood how important it would also be for the community.

This act of storytelling of this particular man is one that becomes part of the history of the library and also a example of the multiple people who wanted and needed to be served by the library. The group had a sense of social justice by creating change in the lives of the people the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* would potential serve and continues to serve. (Mehra, Albright, and Rioux 2006)

The programing through public library services that was created and implemented in the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* was seen as a dream come true. In the context of creating change in people's lives (Mehra, Albright and Rioux 2006) it was often mentioned by interviewees that the programs created community building and increased knowledge. The programing including things like flour tortilla making, Maya Indian weaver, and other culture programs. (Rita Torres 2013) The picture below is of my mother and grandmother looking at some examples of the Maya weaving. (See Figure 7) Marta Morales continues in her interview to talk about the impact that was created,

I volunteered to work at my children's schools and find that I enjoyed working with children. So I was hired as a instructional aide later there were opportunity for instructional aides to further their education so I took advantage of the scholarships and grants and went on to get my BA in liberal studies. Later on I was kind of thirsting more knowledge about literacy so I went and got my masters. After getting my credentials I was still hungry for knowledge and wanted to know more about literacy ... I got my doctorate in education. It has transformed many lives not only did it change my life but the life of my children

and it enriched them. And hopefully the community the families who were going to the library I was hoping it did that. (Marta Morales 2014)

This excerpt from Marta's interview describes how much the library created not only a community but also a culture of creating change through social justice. Marta's life was changed through the interactions and exposures she had at the library but it also changed the lives of her children and the children that she later worked with. She stated in her interview that she supported joint events around literacy at the school with support from the library that was located on the same block. Proximity as far as geographical location is a constant in the history of the Biblioteca Latinoamericana. The transition of the *La Pequeña Biblioteca* library moving out of the closet to the convent and becoming the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* was partially in part due to funding.



Figure 7: Mayan Weaving

THE STATE LIBRARY PROVIDES FUNDING

Creation of the library was a dream and the bake sales were not enough to provide funding to create an entirely new library with full-time staff. The library needed to find funding. Enrique Angulo was mentioned in many interviews because of his role in leadership and in the grant writing. While I could not locate Enrique for an interview, I had the opportunity to interview Yolanda Cuesta, on August 21, 2014. During the early years of the library being founded, Cuesta was working at the California State Library as a Minority Services Consultant. Cuesta also is one of the founding members of *Bibliotecas Para la Gente*, the northern California chapter of REFORMA: The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking. There is a picture in the archive that includes Yolanda and other founding members of this chapter of REFORMA. Cuesta emphasized that it was because the community was very active and organized that the library became more than just a dream. She retells the story of Angulo coming into her office at the State Library in Sacramento and asking for funding for what would be the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. (Yolanda Cuesta 2014) Cuesta describes the community members waiting and their enthusiasm: “It was a lot of passion... This was the 1970s there was still a lot of political upheaval within the state. There was a lot of activism within the state and they just showed that” (Yolanda Cuesta 2014). This act of organizing and partnering with the California State Library rings true to Long’s definition of Libraries Build Community by working together with the community to build this library. The community members were passionately motivated and organized with the support of Yolanda and the

California State Library. Yolanda goes on to describe this first interaction with Enrique and the group:

The most challenging part was really explaining to them that we don't give money to community groups. As a state agency using federal funds or state funds we made grants and awards to jurisdictions, cities, counties. We don't make grants to community organizations. Even if they maybe a recognized group. It was bit of disappointment for them. The message for them was that they needed to work. We listened to them and their concerns... The community group was reluctant. They had some hesitation because they had approached San José Public and been rebuked. So they decided to come directly. It was disappointing to them that we were sending them back to San José Public. But we said we will work it through and help in anyway we can. They appreciated that. (Yolanda Cuesta 2014)

The California State Library provided funding to create what is currently known as the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* branch of the San José Public Library system. This story is similar to the discussion of Francesca Polleta's work on telling stories to create change. (Polleta 3) Yolanda and the staff at the California State Library heard the story of this community and agreed to help the community to create the library.

CREATING CULTURE

The *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* created culture and community within its walls in many ways, by the programming, the music played and even the collection to name a

few. The actions at this library during the early years were similar to what happened at the Forsyth County Public Library. For example, the library played recorded music from the different countries of the patrons. In addition, programs were designed and tailored to patrons' interests. Rita Torres was interviewed on December 12, 2013, in her home. She, the first bicultural and bilingual librarian at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*, stated in her interview;

One thing we did that didn't seem like a big deal and that was we always had Latin American music playing. It creates an environment of comfort not a "sshh" place. (Rita Torres 2013)

Rita Torres saw this need early on for the people going to the library to build a sense of community. The library acknowledged that its patrons needed to see and hear things from their respective countries of origin. Thus, a diverse culture and community was established at the library including particular aspects from the multiple countries represented by the patrons.

Nora Conte was a library clerk during her time working at the library. She was interviewed on March 12, 2014, at the Hollister Public Library that is now her current place of employment. Nora was already working at San José Public Library prior to becoming part of the group that helped to create the library. She was one of what she recalls two people in the system that spoke Spanish. (Nora Conte 2014) Nora enthusiastically took on the role of helping to create the library. She discussed the culture that was created prior to the library even opening;

The most important thing was working with the board. They were a very enthusiastic group, who knew what they wanted. And even then they knew it was important to have a library that focused on the needs of the Spanish speaking community because even then they knew the cultural bridge it could build for those that were coming into the country. And even for those individuals that were even born in the country but wanted to learn more about their culture and their heritage to hold onto their language, Spanish speaking skills. (Nora Conte 2014)

Nora discusses this cultural bridge that created not only a place for immigrants but also people born in the United States of America that may have a ethnic background that included a Spanish speaking country. She describes that the group was before it's time in knowing how important a space such as a library with Spanish materials would create for the community.

Lisa Felberg is a retired Library Assistant, I interviewed her March 10, 2014, on the site of the library. Her story begins when she reluctantly was transferred to the San José Public Library branch of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. Lisa is a white woman who speaks fluent Spanish. She stated with emotion that the community embraced her. (Lisa Feldberg 2014) This is a powerful story of social justice in which library created community and culture that Lisa as an employee was able to embrace. Lisa is an example of a person who not only was bilingual in speaking the Spanish language was able to embrace the Latino communities she works with at the Biblioteca Latinoamericana. She still lives in the community and returns to volunteer. Lisa describes her work in the library and the impact the library made on the community;

I gave my whole life and most of library work and career to this community and saw the changes from the really intimate small space where we had no kitchen.

We used to wash the dishes in the sink and got to participate with the *Amigos de la Biblioteca* who mobilized politically to get our own library which is where we are right now. (Lisa Feldberg 2014)

The end goal of having a building built for this library was mentioned throughout many interviews. What Lisa also brought to her interview was her commitment to the culture and the political organizing that took place within the Gardner/Alma community and the city of San Jose to create this library.

Lisa also brought a different perspective to the history because she is a white woman providing services to the Latino community, but she also understood the importance for a library that represented the community it served.

The goal was always for there to be brown faces and Spanish speakers so people would be less intimidated and learn to love and use the library. Of course I am a *gringa* and I am not one of those brown faces. That was one of my biggest concerns about being here is a taking jobs from Latinos. I was accepted after being here. After people got to know me I was adopted and probably I identify myself as a Latino, even though there is no Latino in me. (Lisa Felberg 2014)

Lisa admitted in her interview that she will not fully understand what it is to be Latino but throughout her years being at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* she has come to understand the culture created at this library. (Lisa Felberg 2014) This again shows how the culture and power of building community through social justice at the library caused

her to identify as a Latina. The culture at the library was created through these interactions and established it's own Latino culture.

Another staff member at the time of the interviews talked about the space of the library. Peggy Elwell was interviewed on March 12, 2013 on site, she was at this time a Teen Services Librarian for the branch. She describes the way the library was used for the community;

You know there is a guy who comes back every year. Who lives in San Francisco, Claudio. [He describes] When I first came here the Biblioteca was my family this was over at CET. He was just like I came here I went there for everything. It meant everything to me. I think you know there are people and families for whom this is like a huge part of their lives. Sometimes they come here to just have a place to be because people may be living in crowded conditions. [There are] People who take advantage of every program we have. We have actually had families that were homeless that used this as home base. You know they would meet the children after school here so sometimes. (Peggy Elwell 2013)

This is an example of the impact of the library on the community. Community was created within the space of this library through community programs, materials available and even the different interactions that took place. This library created a space where multiple social classes and ethnic backgrounds interacted. These experiences were different depending on the background of the individual or individuals. (Massey 3) The library became a home base for families that may not have had a place otherwise; this is

something that Peggy describes as happening during the time of the interview. This speaks to the ongoing sustainability of the culture and community created at the library.

Daniel Morales is Marta Morales' husband and was part of the original group of community members organizing. I conducted Daniel's interview on August 19, 2014, at the Center for Employment Training in San José, California where he was the director. He has since retired from this position. Daniel's office is the in the old Woodrow Wilson building, the second location, before the current location on 921 First Street. Daniel's interview touched on culture and language as shown in the following quote:

I wish all the other parents could see the effects if you expose them and have them around the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. It would help them. There is a lot of resources for retired people. You could read Spanish to them. You know English only... They are marketing everything for Latinos we have to stress Spanish is our language...if you can't speak Spanish you lost your culture and history.

(Daniel Morales 2014)

This quote again depicts this culture of literacy created not only within the walls of the library but also in the homes of it's patrons. Language and history can be seen of great importance in this quote. Daniel's words are similar to the dicho "A people who lose their history lose their destiny." To Daniel, the Spanish language is also part of the culture and history not only of Latino cultures but also the patrons. Daniel mentioned his family throughout the interview and how much the library helped further his children's education and even his wife's education. This is similar to Lisa's acknowledgment of the need to keep the culture and the language of the Latino community. The culture of

literacy created at the library “designed systems and services” for this community as social justice. (Mehra 188)

Storytelling is a way that many communities create culture. Part of the act of testimonio described is the need to learn more about a person’s own cultural “heritage and communities.” (Latina Feminist Group 13) Daniel also discussed the history of storytelling within Latino cultures and the need to keep the history alive. (Mirabal 58) Daniel introduced how the community group involved in the creation supported bringing in Latino authors to the library, and specifically, to assist the children in gaining exposure to these successful people. He thanked me as a researcher for gathering the oral histories and said that he hoped more people in the community would do similar work to gain awareness of what Latinos are doing. (Daniel Morales 2014)

Francisco Jimenez says everybody has a life we just have to put it in writing and share those stories. Those are stories you know that our parents would tell us stories...those are *cuentos*, storytellers. We have to be storytellers to honor our parents. (Daniel Morales 2014)

Daniel’s interview touches on an important aspect of Latino cultures. Here he links storytelling with literacy, which connects to Marta Morales’ discussion concerning the culture of literacy within the Gardner/Alma community and within the homes of patrons. Daniel continued this discussion of the culture of literacy to include the oral stories of his own family members. This rawness and exposure of this personal life is an example of risking the personal. (Anzaldúa 33) This risk is for the greater good of the community as it will become part of the collective history of the library placed in the archive.

Many notable authors came to the library in the early years. The group wanted Spanish language materials and cultural materials, but soon the mission expanded and the group wanted role models that were Latinos to show the youth they could also succeed. Sandra Cisneros is one of the authors who came to the library. Her stories are known for encompassing Latino cultures and communities. This project can be seen as a testimonio by making the history of the library visible. The Latina Feminist Group discusses the need to go beyond the story and expose the “institutional violence and personal assaults experienced as Latinas.” (Latina Feminist Group 20) The visibility in the case of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* encompasses all the genders able to tell the story and history of this library. The interviews all showed some aspect of how culture was created within the Gardner/Alma community. Each interlocutor had their own take on how they saw the development and the creation of history in the library and exposed this through the interview.

THE FUTURE OF THE LIBRARY

Many of the interviews discussed the current state of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* in the context of the library materials. The library celebrated its 15 years in the current building, but as the writing of this thesis the library has been open a total of 40 years. In those years, many things have changed throughout the San José Public Library system. Many of the concerns expressed were for the outdated materials. Peggy Elwell describes the change from the first years of the library opening to the current condition of the library;

I think its there is a lot more Spanish collections all over the city now. *Biblioteca* while it is still unique and has more depth. I think the *Biblioteca* helped to inspire some of those other collections. I will say that I think ... and mentioned this to the library management more then once the collection right now is really old and not admirable especially and particularly adult Spanish non-fiction. Some adult non-fiction. We have more new things with the children's area. But not enough for adults, that it disappoints me and I am still working on that. And it but it still kind of provides it raises the bar, you know. We are kind of the one that has to speak for the Spanish speaking population even though the population is very scattered and all over, and these collections at a lot of the branches the Spanish collections since we really concentrate on that and what we do affects and improves what happens in other areas ... (Peggy Elwell 2013)

This quote describes the need for more updated materials but it also shows how the library creates a stepping-stone for the rest of the system. In the archives there are letters from multiple universities and agencies, even from other countries inquiring about the collection. There are also letters of thanks for people receiving tours of the library. This does not appear to be the case anymore as materials are outdated. Similar feelings were expressed in other interviews. Rita Torres describes the current collection;

I will say I have felt the mission of being a center of Spanish services is being diminished. When they built the new building probably 10 to 12 years old [the materials]. [There is] a lot of debate, at the time I was the lead for international language collection at the library ... I felt responsible for to maintain the depth of

the materials. When times get tough colleagues would ask why we are spending money. We have taxpayers in the community their preferred language [should be preference]. It was constant, different communities have different experiences. Libraries count by how many times checked out [materials] not in house [use]. So getting people in management that value but not going to see it through the regular measure. They wanted to make it like any other branch ... If was was Chicano literature to compliment the Spanish materials. But that's not what was being purchased. It started to feel to me it was going to become another branch it would lose its character and some of that change has started. (Rita Torres 2013)

Rita expresses her concern as well for the changes occurring in the library. The ability to measure use of materials at the library was not one that could be taken for account, as many of the materials were used in house. The measures Rita describes that were used at the time took for account on the amount of times a book was checked out. There are many reasons why the population could not check out a book, for example they may not have been able to get a library card due to identification or fear of fines. This quote shows concern that new materials will not be purchased to replace the currently outdated collection. The uniqueness of the library housing Spanish materials is what made it stand out especially considering the rich history that included the group organizing to create it. This library was created with social justice at it's core has started to lose part of the original design.

The future does not look bleak in terms of the history of this library. Many interviews expressed the changes and impact that was made on site through events, being

open to the public and holding a Spanish collection and cultural materials. Marta Morales describes a story in the following passage that supported in the title for this thesis:

I know that all the work that I put in is worth it. Also when I was working at Washington Elementary, which you know is next to almost next door to the Biblioteca. I started a literacy adult literacy program for the parents of that community... Some of them didn't know how to read ... I knew that it had been worth the sacrifices that I made ... because one day there was a mother who could barely read, didn't now how to read we use to have literature circles ... I would assign the parents to go and read the book with their children ... She said *maestra* my reading has improved. I can now read the books that you assigned us. But one day I was walking through the hall ways of the school and I saw that mother ... She was caring a stack of books and I said *Senora donde vas con tantos libros, ah senoria es que regresar los a la biblioteca mis hijos la me leeros y no quiero que me cobren*. [Ma'am. Where are you going with so many books? Miss I need to return them to the library. My children have read them and I don't want a late fee.] I knew then that they had created a culture of literacy ... The mother had a very limited ... literacy skills. She still provided a culture of literacy in the home. She had her children go to the library regularly. They checked out books. They read every night and that did not happen before the literacy classes. So those are the stories that I still remember and treasure.

This is a great example of how powerful the culture of literacy and community was created within the walls of this library. The literacy circles started with the close

proximity of the library as a foundation and support. This quote describes a personal connection from mother to mother and the hope to create a space for education for the children in question. Not only did the mother learn to read but also the children, they learned together through these literacy circles and created their own culture of literacy within the home. The stories told in this section are only a small glimpse into the collection of oral histories that tell the history of this library.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This work has explored the past, as well as my connection to the Biblioteca Latinoamericana. Libraries currently are changing in framework and function. The library was before its time in emphasizing community, culture, and housing Spanish language materials. Today's libraries continue to do the work originally set out by libraries to do when they are built with auditoriums, coffee shops, and/or are attached to community centers.

The *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* created a community that encompasses the Latino cultures and Spanish language that are at the roots of this community. This definition of community goes much deeper beyond the geographical location of the library as it creates a sense of belonging among the people who are involved with the library and accesses its resources. This library created a culture based on the music that was played, the materials available, the programs, and even the staff that worked there. But most of all, the patrons continued to come back and embrace the culture and start to create community.

WHAT I LEARNED

The methodologies of oral histories and storytelling were at the core of this research. I learned early on that I needed to introduce the research but also who I am as Monica Lozano, former community member, patron, family member to individuals in the community, Spanish speaker and even graduate student. Often times some of the most fascinating information would be provided when the recordings were turned off. Growing

up as a Latina in San José also provided a connection through the interviews as I knew some of the interviewees as a patron or former volunteer of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*. I also had the commonality of knowing the area and neighborhood. This thesis has become part of my own testimonio of how I got to graduate school and my journey to become a librarian. (Latina Feminist Group 12) I may not know it at the start of my research or even as a child, but the seed was planted early on for me to be in this field through the experiences and exposures I had at the library.

THE EXPERIENCE

The experience of doing original research at the masters level is unique within its own right. The ability to be able to choose where and how to do this research was exciting. Specifically because I had the opportunity to visit my home town often throughout my graduate career and interact with individuals that supported in the process of me getting a college education even if they may not have known it at the time. There were two aspects of conducting this research one was being physically in the space of the library and the other was collecting the oral histories. Prior to this project I had minimal experience with oral histories. I learned much of my skills through readings and conducting the different interviews. My experience with archives was in a course I took the spring of 2014, in which I had the opportunity to process a archive with another student in the school of information. All the skills learned throughout this research process further developed my research skills and brought me closer to the Gardner/Alma community.

THE LITERATURE IN CONTEXT

Public libraries as a place going beyond the access of materials and creating community are something that is a current trend in libraries. Kathleen de la Peña McCook

states, “The public library supports family literacy” (McCook 1) among other objectives. This is a central theme seen throughout the interviews discussed in this thesis. The culture described in this thesis goes beyond Latino cultures and Spanish language communities; by describing this culture of literacy created within the library and home setting. The history created within the library is one with the uniqueness of holding stories from multiple Latin American countries and communities. The stories told through oral history are based on memory and are true to each of the interviewees. (Trouillot 14) The whole of the interviews will become part of the history housed in the archive of the library. Social justice has seen itself in many forms through this project and thesis. It is defined early on in the form of activism using Francesca Polleta’s framework of activism through story. (Polleta 33) The other framework is from the field of information studies describing it as “meaningful and empowering” through “systems and services” provided. (Mehra 188) Social justice is seen in the history of the library through the organizing, activism and services provided once the library was created. The *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* history provided through this thesis is one that tells a story and continues to document the culture created within the community.

MONICA THE FEMINIST

One of my first classes at the University of Texas at Austin was entitled Introduction to Women and Gender Studies. We discussed many topics in this course and all of the students came from similar yet different academic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. One of the discussions early on was about the term and word feminism/feminist. I admitted that initially this was not a label that I often labeled myself because of stigma around feminism. I believed many of the beliefs of feminism, especially considering this would be my second degree in women and gender studies. I

started to realize that I identified more with Chicana feminism through the readings of Anzaldúa. I read and reread many of her writings and found the foundation for much of the work done in this project. As a feminist I struggle with how do I frame the work in a way that I acknowledge my privilege as a researcher and academic but still give the community what it needs. When I decided to do the project at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* I knew early on I would be having to risk the personal because of my connection to the library. Through out this process I have learned the history of the library, my personal connection beyond my childhood experiences and how I can continue to advocate for Latino communities and cultures as a librarian. Another form of my feminism is the act of giving the data collected back to the library.

FUTURE RESEARCH

I have spent the past two years working at Austin Public Library as a Connected Youth Intern, working in the Connected Youth Teen Centers throughout East Austin. I have been placed at multiple branches through out the city. This employment overlapped with the research conducted in San José. Through this internship I worked with youth in East Austin many of whom speak Spanish and are ethnically Latin and/or Central American. I have witnessed first hand youth become excited when first learning that I spoke Spanish. One of my first weeks on the job I heard youth saying something inappropriate in the teen center in Spanish. I responded to them in Spanish that no matter what language they were speaking in that was not appropriate in the teen center. The youth looked shocked and asked if I really spoke Spanish. I let them know yes and that it was my first language. The youth proceeded to tell me that they had yet to meet a youth librarian that spoke Spanish. From that day forward they greeted me in Spanish and even came up to me to hug me. This is one of many stories and interactions that I have had

throughout my years working in the system that have been similar. The youth are often surprised but also grateful. Many whom from the point of being aware of the language continuing to speak to me only in Spanish. This example of my connection and work experience are similar to the experiences and culture created at the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*.

My experiences both in the Austin Public Library and growing up frequenting this library are part of what forms my career goals of being a feminist librarian. I hope to continue to expose different Latino communities and cultures and make them visible. (Latina Feminist Group 20) I would be interested in looking at how the presence of a bilingual and bicultural staff member affects the interactions between the patrons. How are the interactions with the particular staff member and even the frequency of library visits? It would also be of interest to study beyond the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana* and look at similar structures throughout the country. Are other libraries functioning in the same compacity and how are they keeping the history of there libraries? History, language and culture are seen through out the oral histories.

The library started with multiple people involved and it would be of interest to go back to students and even staff at San Jose State that supported in the creation of this library. In further research I might take oral history interviews of the patrons who accessed the library throughout the years and how it impacted their lives academically, socially, and even economically. This would be another set of interviews to also add to the collection of the history in the current archive. Many of the interviewees noted that the library has changed their lives in some way and that they witnessed the community also become more aware of resources. I know as a patron that my own interactions with the staff have changed my education goals. I was also told of many stories about other patrons who visited frequently and went on to receive master's degrees and even Ph.D.s.

Marta Morales herself states what she witnessed inspired her to go back to school and ultimately receive her degrees including a Ph.D. A point of interest would be to gather more oral histories for the archive but also specifically look at how culture, identity and even education affected patrons who came to the throughout the years. Education and people going on to higher educational degrees was something that was stated in multiple interviews.

It would also be of interest to interview the original graduate students who helped survey the Gardner/Alma community in order to access for the need of materials and the library in 1977. These former graduate students might give insight as to what the community looked like when they were interviewing potential patrons. They would also be able to give oral histories of their experience in that project and what they see of the current state. This would be of interest because they actively engaged with the community prior to the creation of the current space and place of the *Biblioteca Latinoamericana*.

This was a small qualitative study of oral history interviews of a small community in the Gardner/Alma neighborhood of San José, California. The research on site took place over the course of two years. As a graduate student in two departments with a close personal connection to this library, this work was done with the goal of social justice under the framework of Chicana feminism in mind. I hope to continue to create change and further enhance the experiences and lives of Latinos and Spanish speaking individuals as a librarian and researcher in the future.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Biblioteca Oral History Interview Question Template

Date of interview and time:

State my name:

State interviewee name:

Place of interview:

Collecting Oral histories for the Biblioteca Latinoamericana

1. How did you hear about the Biblioteca?
2. What do you remember was your first interaction with the Biblioteca?
3. How did the community get the idea of creating the Biblioteca?
4. What is your favorite story about the Biblioteca?
5. How do you feel the political climate during the first years of the Biblioteca had any affect on the Biblioteca and it's founding?
6. What do you think the Biblioteca felt like for someone just arriving to San Jose and/or the United States?
7. What do you remember of the transition of the Biblioteca to the San Jose Public Library system?
8. Do you feel the Biblioteca supported in community building for the Latino/Spanish speaking community in the area?
9. From its creation to the now, How do you feel the Biblioteca is meeting the goals originally set in place by it's founders?
10. What is your current connection with the Biblioteca?

Do you have anything else you would like to say?

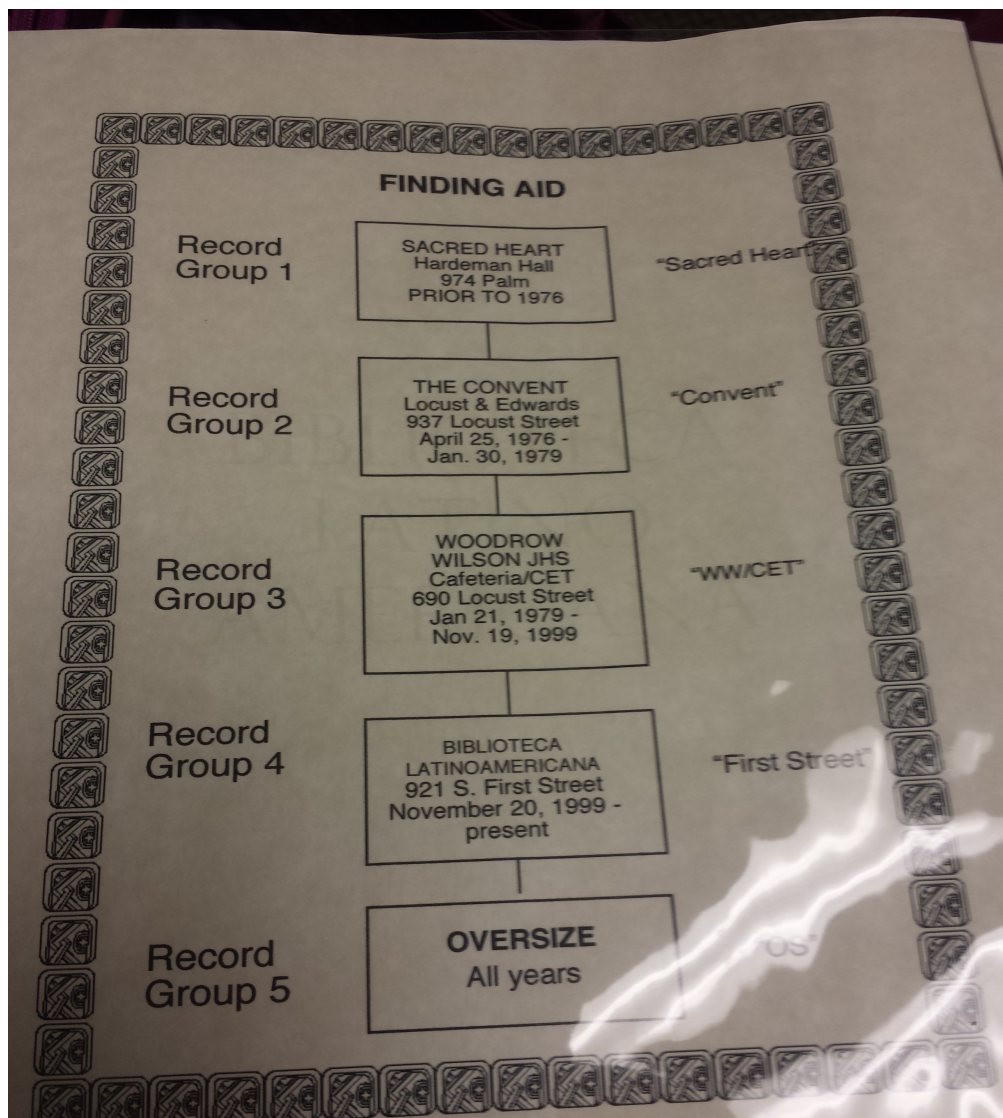
Is there someone else you think would have a good story that I should talk to?

Do you have their contact information?

What is the best way to contact you if you I have any questions?

Close: this is the end of the interview.

Appendix B: Finding Aid



Appendix C: A Dream Fulfilled

La Gran Apertura de la Nueva Biblioteca Latinoamericana/Cápsula de Tiempo
Noviembre 21, 1999 San Jose, California
Marta Frias Morales

Un sueño realizado

Este evento histórico empezó mucho antes que el año 1974 cuando un grupo de madres jóvenes empezaron la primera biblioteca llamada *Los Pequeños del Sagrado Corazón*. La verdad es que tiene principios en la historia colectiva de nuestro pueblo.

Es cierto que la semilla fue plantada por un grupo de madres jóvenes que deseaban que sus hijos tuvieran éxito escolar. Hubiera sido un hermoso pequeño esfuerzo olvidado si no hubiera sido también el sueño de miles y miles de personas de nuestra comunidad.

Este fuerte y firme edificio es una expresión auténtica que muestra el amor que nuestra comunidad tiene por la literatura, el conocimiento, y la educación.

Dentro esta capsula se encuentra la historia de la Biblioteca Latinoamericana. Que se preserve y que se relate de nuevo en el 49 aniversario de la Biblioteca. Que se mantenga viva la historia de la Biblioteca.

A Dream Fulfilled

This historical event had its beginnings prior to 1974 when a small group of young mothers formed the first community library called, *The Biblioteca los Pequeños del Sagrado Corazón*. This event is rooted in the collective history of our community.

It is true that the seed was planted by a group of young mothers who wanted their children to experience academic success. It would have been a beautiful and forgotten effort had it not also been the dream of thousands and thousands of people in our community.

This strong handsome building is an authentic expression of the love our community has for literature, knowledge, and education.

Within this capsule is the recorded history of Biblioteca Latinoamericana. Let it be preserved here until the 49th anniversary of the Biblioteca. Retell this story and keep it alive for the benefit of our children.

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